

No. 80  
April, 1982



## What's Inside?

Annual Election Dinner  
(see back cover)  
Malt Factory EIR  
Kearny Landscaping  
Downtown Growth

# TELEGRAPH HILL SEMAPHORE

*Publication of the Telegraph Hill Dwellers*

## Slate of Officers

Your Nominating Committee, consisting of Jim Augustino, Katherine Koelsch, Judy Robinson, Bob Bullock, Greg Jones and Jack Moss (alternate) is pleased to present the following slate of officers and directors for your consideration on April 12th.

### OFFICERS:

President	*Jerry Petruzzelli . . . . .	288 Union	397-6043
Vice President	*Judy Robinson . . . . .	562B Lombard	982-8533
Recording Secretary	Jeanne Milligan . . . . .	486 Union	989-0494
Corresponding Secretary	*Helga Ginige . . . . .	43 Edith	781-8133
Treasurer	*Bob Bullock . . . . .	31 Genoa	391-3645
Financial Secretary	Virginia Sletteland . . . . .	448 Greenwich	781-4352
Historian	David Myrick . . . . .	390 Chestnut	982-4670
Editor— <i>Semaphore</i>	*Lynne Burwell . . . . .	321 Chestnut	982-9715

### DIRECTORS, 1982-1984:

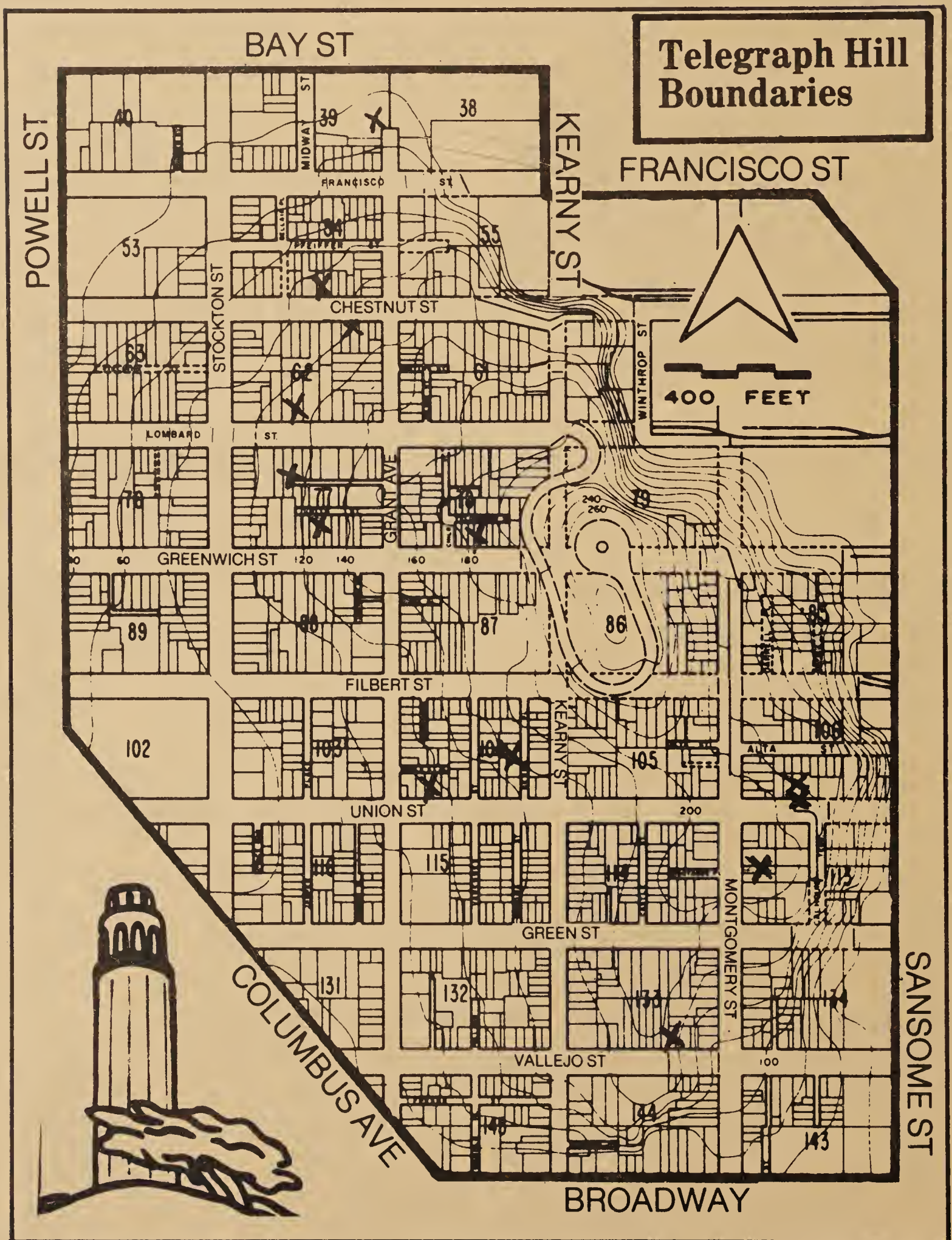
Greg Jones . . . . .	58 Edgardo Place	986-6412
Herb Kosovitz . . . . .	340 Chestnut	398-0757
Maryanne Otsea . . . . .	1236 Montgomery	421-0768
Nan Roth . . . . .	2017 Grant	397-2176

### DIRECTORS remaining on the Board, 1981-1983:

Bill Snow . . . . .	1245 Kearny	397-7657
Jerry Lubenow . . . . .	300 Lombard	981-8279
JoEtta Agee . . . . .	288 Union	981-2521
*Jack Moss . . . . .	265 Telegraph Hill	781-4077
Ex Officio Jim Augustino . . . . .	426 Vallejo	956-1889



SLATE NOMINEES' RESIDENCES ARE MARKED WITH AN X:





# Malt Factory EIR Completed

A number of questions and concerns are not satisfactorily answered by an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) published February 19, 1982, for the "Francisco Place" office and condominium development on Francisco and Chestnut between Mason and Powell. A public hearing on the report was scheduled for March 25 by the City Planning Department. Copies of the report (EE 80.248) may be obtained by writing the Department, 100 Larkin Street, San Francisco, 94107.


The report outlines problems connected with development of the site below Telegraph Hill, in which existing towers up to 100 feet high would be used for costly condominiums (a total of 93 residential units are planned, including 12 moderate income units) and 48,000 square feet of office space at street level. About 190 parking spaces are proposed for the excavation three floors below ground level.

Because the towers (only) were designated as landmarks, modification of their exterior requires a "certificate of appropriateness" from the Landmarks Preservation Board. This certificate was hastily approved on March 15th. (Judy Robinson and Nan Roth submitted testimony opposing the certificate.) The project also requires a Conditional Use permit from the Planning Department for its proposed mixed-use development and recycling of the towers, which violates the 40-foot height limit.

Some unresolved concerns for neighborhood residents are the following:

- *Towers.* Use of the existing 100-foot towers will block views and, worse, add a new dimension: glare and bright lights. The mitigation measures proposed by the sponsors—tinted, nonreflective windows on the south facade "where recommended by mechanical and energy consultants" (EIR, p. 95), and no exterior lighting above the second story—will not satisfactorily mitigate the night and daytime glare. Furthermore, there is no guarantee that the planning regulators will require, nor the sponsor install, even these measures. The proposed mitigation measures need more precise explanation than the EIR provides. Long-range views will continue to be obstructed unless the towers are scaled down to reduce long shadows in the neighborhood. It is interesting to note that 24% *more* residential units could be constructed on the site and more underground parking provided if the towers were *removed* (EIR, p. 108). Furthermore, solar energy plates are planned for the roof, which may also add glare and unsightliness.
- *Parking and Traffic.* The report, while stating that "worst case" parking and traffic conditions were studied, does not take into account the potential for increased traffic from visitors to offices and shoppers at retail stores. In fact, despite mention of retail shops by the developers at neighborhood meetings, the EIR does not refer to them at all. Are they planned? Did the EIR take





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shoppers into account? The project admits that "the availability of long-term parking for office workers would tend to encourage commuter driving rather than use of transit" (EIR, p. 65).

- *Open Space.* The project proposes that 35% of the site area is "open space." There would be a total of 50% open space if "private open space" and "common open space" are combined. It is not clear whether the "common open space" is accessible to the public. This should be clarified.
- *Archeological and Historical Factors.* The site is above the remains of Gold Rush era Meigg's Wharf and Sawmill, important archeological remains of the city's early history. The sponsor proposes to suspend excavation for up to two weeks if archeological information is found—that is two weeks less than the Office of Environmental Review normally recommends for suspension of construction while archeological digging and research is conducted. The project should be *required* to suspend operations for the longer period for such significant research.
- *Dangers of Excavation.* According to the EIR, the site has the "potential for ground failure hazards" (EIR, p. 51), which could cause major shifting of and/or damage not only to the existing structures but to neighborhood buildings resulting from excavation or earthquakes. There is considerable ground water beneath the site and soft sand, which are major problems for the excavations as now planned (30 feet below the surface for parking spaces). It is unclear from the EIR what happens if the site is found unsafe for such excavations. Will the project go forward, seeking further zoning variances?



- *Visual Quality and Urban Design.* The project does not conform to the *Urban Design Element* of the city's Comprehensive Plan (EIR, p. 58), despite what the EIR says. The *Urban Design Element* states that historic buildings "provide a richness of character, texture and human scale" and "help characterize many neighborhoods of the city." The Malt Factory does the opposite by violating neighborhood characteristics, which are low-rise and nonindustrial.

Anyone concerned about the environmental impact of this large-scale project will find the EIR fascinating reading. The EIR failed to mention that more than 60 local residents signed a petition opposing landmark status for the Malt Factory and favoring removal of the tall towers. Let the city planners know your views on this imposing development.

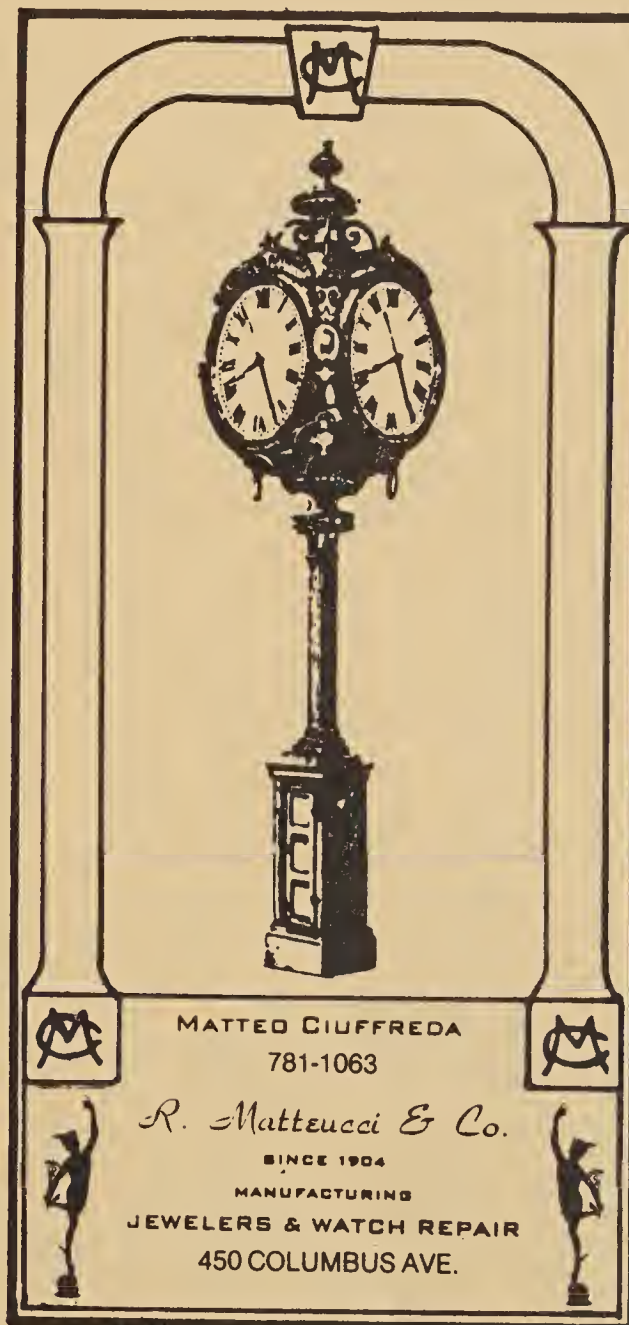
## RBAGE RECAPITULATED

Legal garbage collection is cheap, but some people in North Beach/New Chinatown avoid paying their own way and the rest of us are taxed for their neglect and must contend with the streets they pollute.

Hill Dwellers are all too aware of private garbage left to rot in the streets until the next pickup—or until the dogs tear the bags into unsightly messes. Some of us have watched people deliver their bags (even by the cartful) to public containers in Washington Square. This writer has twice seen garbage openly dumped out the window!

The Green and Varennes corner is usually a notable eyesore, as is the entire adjacent block of Varennes. Much of Green from Kearny to Grant is plagued by it, as are the same blocks on Union.

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On December 22, Mervyn Silverman told the Health & Environment Committee that of the cool million annually paid by city for public trash collection, \$600,000 goes for what is dumped in our streets. But during 1981 Dr. Silverman's inspectors issued *not one* citation to curb this problem. The police litter patrol did much better, but this unit is too small to cope with the enormity of the problem.

Health & Environment now seems to be trying to "sweep this mess under the rug" via the postpone-until-forgotten technique, perhaps because of the ethnic implications.

So what's to be done? *Public pressure is the only answer.*

Readers are urged to write or phone Jack Molinari, to write Health & Environment, Attn: Doris Ward (chief postponer!), and to attend her committee's meetings if our subject hasn't been postponed off the agenda. Refer to File 510-81. Be indignant. Push for computer matching (of scavenger customer lists with Water Department and Assessor lists), with well-publicized fines to residents who lack adequate service. Push for 3-language signs on public containers, prohibiting private use and stating the fines in large letters.

Keep phoning and writing until this behavior is stopped.

# PAY YOUR DUES NOW



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS' REPORT

### MOTIONS PASSED—February 2, 1982

To approve the budget as submitted for the first three quarters of the fiscal year.

To approve the budget for the upcoming fiscal year.

To send out a second letter to property owners who have not responded to the first letter about the historic district. The letter to be sent out one week following the General Membership meeting on February 16.

To choose Bob Bullock, Katherine Koelsch, and Judy Robinson for the nominating committee, with Jack Moss as an alternate. (Jim Augustino and Greg Jones were appointed.)

To authorize the committee to continue negotiations with Capurro and Olympic Savings and Loan to reduce the amount of space the savings and loan would take up, to extend the moratorium, reassert our goals, and to assist Rossi's Pharmacy in obtaining a lease.

To ask for discretionary review for the proposed building at Montgomery and Filbert (1400 Montgomery).

To send a letter to the Building Department to request that they verify the height on a building at 23 Alta.

To send a follow-up letter in complaint on the Ellision Enterprise sign.

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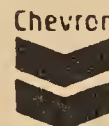
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## PROPOSAL FOR BRANCH LIBRARIES

Lowell Martin, an independent library consultant, submitted his plan for a new branch library system on February 25th. According to the proposed plan, there would be six super branches, supplemented by nine special interest branches housing more specialized collections. Ten branches would be closed including our own North Beach Library. It is estimated that a savings of \$800,000 would result from consolidating the branches and that this money could be used to build up existing collections, hire professional staff, and develop computerized sources of information.

Martin maintains that the plan is designed not to discriminate against the neighborhoods, but rather to benefit the entire library system. Some service must be cut if the library is to continue to function at all effectively given the present low level of funding. Unfortunately the plan would hurt North Beach and particularly the schoolchildren who use its resources fully. It must be emphasized, however, that the plan is simply a recommendation, and, even if approved, it would not be implemented for at least a year.

Those who are interested in contributing to the decision-making process on library organization and possibly even exploring new avenues of funding should call the Friends of the San Francisco Public Library, 558-3770. In addition, there will be a public hearing on Wednesday, March 31 at 7:30 p.m. at the Marina branch, as well as a final public hearing on Saturday, April 3 at 10:00 a.m. in the Commission Room of the Main Library.



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# Latest Zoning

## Offices Bite the Dust at 725 Greenwich

On March 4th, THD won an important victory that effectively prevented an office developer from erecting a four-story office building at the corner of Greenwich and Powell. The episode received prominent attention in the *Chronicle* and *Examiner*, as well as from a local radio station. Jerry Petruzzelli and Herb Kosovitz appeared on behalf of the Dwellers. Both of them noted that an office building at 725 Greenwich was illegal under the interim zoning initiated by THD last August. The petition sponsored by the Dwellers temporarily converts the Columbus Avenue corridor and most of North Beach from C-2 commercial (with a 65-foot height limit and provision for commercial and office space above the first floor) to the more restrictive RH-2, -3, or -4 classification (allowing for only ground floor commercial-office space and residential units above within a 40-foot height limit).

Petruzzelli argued that North Beach was primarily a residential community with neighborhood-serving uses and that an incompatible office building would demonstrate that the City Planning Commission

was not dedicated to preserving the unique atmosphere of our area. In a letter written to the Planning Commission, Petruzzelli further contended that the project should be denied not only because it was unlawful under the interim zoning, but also because the building was inappropriate in North Beach. Under the applicant's conditional use petition, incompatibility is a basis for disapproval of a proposal. Decrying "office creep," Petruzzelli and Kosovitz warned the commission that construction of office space at the expense of much-needed housing and commercial diversity was a trade-



725 Greenwich

off that the city could ill afford. Petruzzelli finally submitted that the project would not conform to the city's Master Plan, which calls for development of offices south of Market Street and non-encroachment in neighborhoods.





1025 Sansome

## 1025 Sansome

A new project for development of a 7-story office building at the northwest corner of Vallejo and Sansome has been proposed by the owners of the property. At a meeting held with Jim Augustino and Jerry Petruzelli, architects for the developer said the proposed project would contain approximately 50,000 square feet of offices, complete with two floors of parking. The building at 1025 Sansome occupies a whole block between Vallejo and Green. It is now 4 stories high and contains parking and offices. It would be necessary to obtain a variance reclassifying part of the property from RH-3 to a less restrictive C-2 use. A parking variance might also be required. This is just another example of how Sansome Street extends the financial district. "Downtown" now stretches from Howard Street to Lombard, given the recent completion of the Levi Strauss facility.

Views of all the residents who live from Broadway to Green on the north and south and Prescott to Montgomery on the west would be dramatically affected by this building. Augustino and Petruzzelli pointed out that there would be a need for an Environmental Impact Report before such a project was undertaken. They also noted that the community would be opposed to the project simply on the grounds of its enormity, wholly apart from the fact that views might be blocked and parking facilities eliminated.

The developer urged that the offices would remove an eyesore from the existing community and, unlike 1000 Montgomery, not displace any residents. There would be no loss of housing to the community in the developer's eyes, and therefore no reason to reject the proposal. Unpersuaded, the commission unanimously ruled against the developer. This was a vindication of the THD reclassification petition. The commission's decision may represent a commitment to disapproving office conversions and construction in areas near the financial district.

In order to prevent further "office creep," THD intends to remain vigilant about projects that threaten to destroy the very fabric of community life in North Beach.





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## Downtown Growth: How, When, Where?

"Thinking About Growth," a report by the San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association (SPUR) on San Francisco and the Bay Area is excerpted below:

Office-based activity emphasizing information processing is the primary source of economic growth for San Francisco and the Bay Area and is primarily responsible for the boom in office construction. Between 1970 and 1979 San Francisco averaged 1.6 million square feet of new office space per year. Four million square feet are scheduled to come on line by the end of this year with an additional 20 million square feet of office space construction pending. Despite the building boom in San Francisco, office vacancy rates remain low and rents high, averaging \$36 a square foot, twice the cost of space in Oakland and second only to New York City in the nation.

The high cost of office space in San Francisco is forcing business activities involving mainly lower-paid employees to be located in the suburbs. Thus potential entry-level jobs for unemployed San Franciscans are lost.

Jobs and tax revenues are the two main benefits of continued office development. Property taxes on last year's new construction added \$19 million and payroll taxes on new employees contributed an additional \$8 million to city finances. During the 1970s, population growth in the region increased at only 1/2 to 1/3 the rate of job growth, thereby providing jobs for many residents.

The three major problems caused by this growth are:

*Housing.* New jobs (60-80,000 projected) mean new workers requiring housing. Construction is falling far short of demand, especially in the area of affordable units. Density will have to be increased, perhaps through home sharing or by converting land now devoted to other uses to housing.

*Transportation.* Our transit systems are reaching commuter-carrying capacity. With the cutback in federal subsidies, transit operators foresee problems even in retaining the present level of service. The greatest potential lies in car and van pooling to reduce the number of empty car seats entering the city during commute times.

*Environment.* Housing and transportation problems threaten the very environmental quality for which the Bay Area is known. In San Francisco, growth impacts the built environment. Congestion increases in the neighborhoods. Architecturally-unique older houses are demolished and replaced by new structures that change the scale and definition of public space.

Neither the public nor the private sector alone can solve these problems. The public sector is hampered because local jurisdictions are trying to influence regional economic trends. The private sector has divergent interests and lacks authority. SPUR believes that a joint public-private effort is needed to bring together the information, resources, and commitment to make the most of growth. THD hopes that the forthcoming downtown Environmental Impact Report will address these problems of growth and will not breezily dismiss diminution in the quality of housing, transportation, and environment.



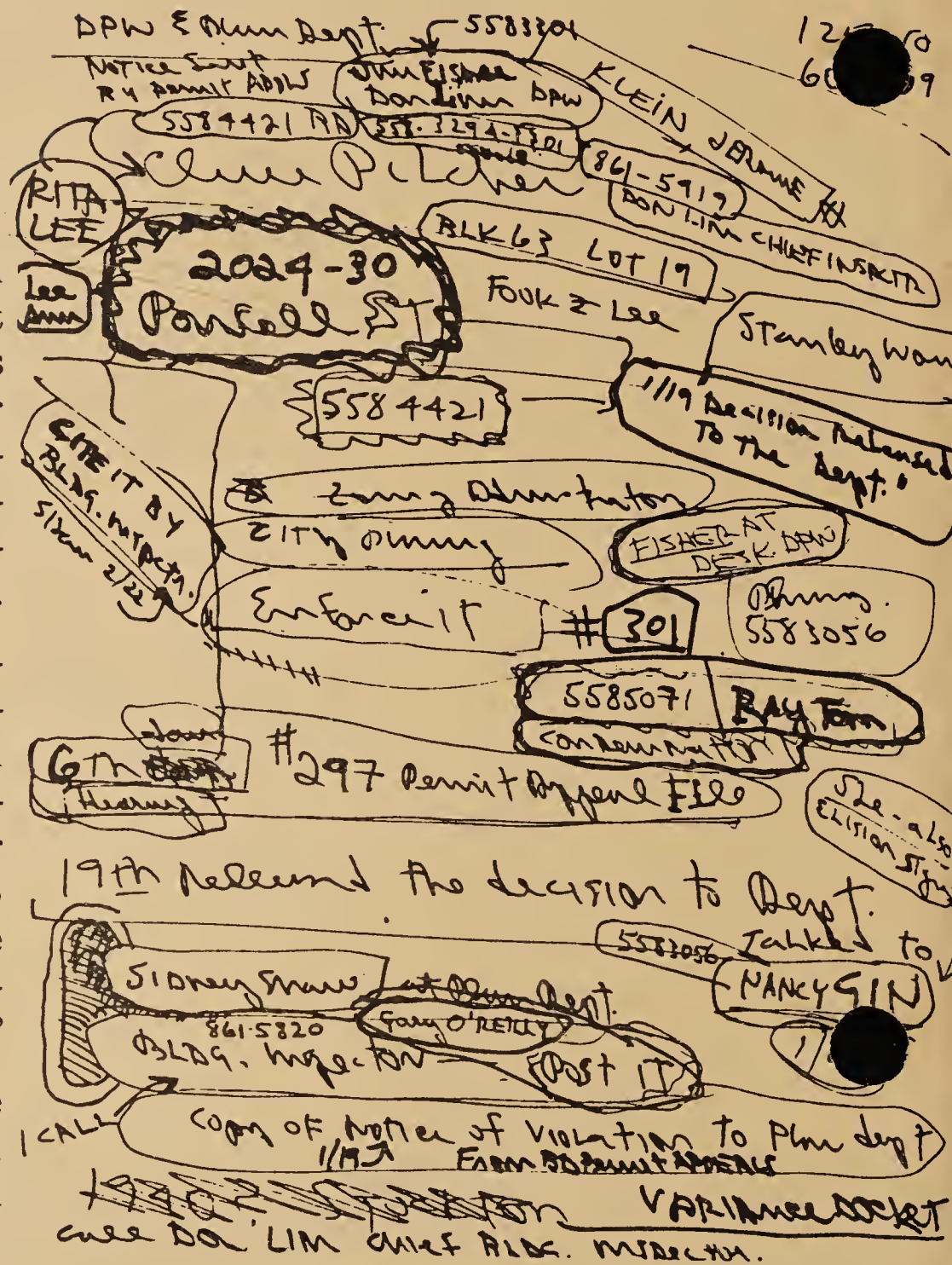
## 2024-2030 POWELL

The Board of Permit Appeals decreed on January 6th that an addition built without benefit of permit in the rear yard of this property should be removed. As the reader can ascertain from the accompanying reproduction of the THD Taskforce worksheet on 2024-2030 Powell, it is not always easy to follow through at City Hall.

The decision of the Board of Permit Appeals was finally delivered to the Department of Condemnation, and on March 17th a letter was dispatched from the Department of Building Inspection to the owner of 2024-2030 Powell instructing him to "obtain the necessary permit to dismantle the 10' x 12' bedroom added without permit and . . . to properly dismantle same."

Meanwhile, the wheels are turning. Since we suspect that the owner has an aversion to the permit process, we wonder if he will obtain one for the demolition?

The wheels continue to turn about 2024-2030 Powell:



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## Landscaping the Kearny Street Steps

At its January board meeting, the Hill Dwellers moved that Jerry Lubenow and Bill Snow proceed with a project to improve the Kearny Street steps between Broadway and Vallejo. The top portion of the block, above Fresno, has no garages and is not used by autos, being blocked at the top by a low wall that currently celebrates the Forty-Niners.

In 1978, a graduate student did a site inventory, analysis, and some drawings of a plan to turn the top portion of the street into a park and to landscape the sides of the street adjoining it. Fifty thousand dollars was set aside from Open Space Funds. These funds are still available and are managed by the Department of Public Works.

Recently Jerry, with the help of Bill, Anne Halsted, Tim Lilliquist of the Parks Department, and Doug Martin of DPW, revived the effort to take advantage of the funds and to beautify the south slope of Telegraph Hill. Due to its steepness, the improvements will be visible all the way from Market Street.

Roger Owen Boyer and Associates, Architects and Planners, have been engaged to do a master plan for the entire block and specific plans for the Fresno to Vallejo section. It is likely that additional money will be needed to make significant improvements, since the existing street must be torn up, and since the city charges certain fees in addition to construction costs.

Roger will soon begin additional analysis, photographing the site, and sketching some alternative schemes. His plan will determine what can be done with the money we have, and what would be possible if we engage in further fundraising. Enrico's and Vanessi's

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have been contacted for assistance, and the three property owners affected have been notified.

Anyone who would like to look at the plans when they are ready and help with the fundraising should speak to Jerry Lubenow or Bill Snow at the next Hill Dwellers' meeting.



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The Tel Hi-sponsored benefit on Saturday, May 1, will feature roulette, craps, blackjack, 5-card draw, and stud poker. A \$25 tax-deductible contribution will buy food (donated by neighborhood restaurants, one drink (other drinks at moderate prices), and five chips to get started.

Dwellers will receive invitations to the benefit, part of a major capital fundraising drive started two years ago by Tel Hi. The neighborhood association is an important asset to North Beach, providing day care, nursery school, senior activities, language classes, and job training and employment opportunities for residents of the Bay Street Housing Project.

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## HISTORIC DISTRICT SURVEY

The first polling of the property owners within the area of the Telegraph Hill historic district survey produced a most encouraging 20% response. In order to file the application to establish the district, 65% of the total number of property owners must be in accord. A second mailing is under way to answer questions raised by the procedure and to remind the others—the 80% silent majority—of their right to vote. Please remind friends, neighbors, or perhaps yourself. For the record, we need to hear from you. Anyone wishing additional information should contact our coordinator, Mrs. G. Bland Platt at 922-3579.



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## ELLISION SIGN HANGS ON

The garish sign advertising Ellision Enterprises at the corner of Stockton and Greenwich is still a visual affront to angry neighborhood residents, despite complaints to the City Planning Department and allegations by THD that the sign violates the city planning code.

The Dwellers have sent two letters to the Planning Department noting that the sign was given department approval *after* THD had filed its rezoning proposal. Once the rezoning application was filed, it should have precluded approval of new zoning permits, such as the one Ellision's sign received. Furthermore, the Hill Dwellers allege that the sign blatantly violates Planning Code section 606 (b), which prohibits signs that project over the street above the ground floor. The code requires that signs for commercial establishments be "placed flat against the wall that faces such street and not located above the ground floor." The large, protruding, orange sign clearly does not conform to the code!

When Planning Department Director Dean Macris and Zoning Administrator Robert Passmore attended the February 16th general meeting of the Dwellers, they were asked to explain what action was being taken on the sign and what they were doing to facilitate its removal. The administrators said they would look into the matter, but they indicated that it would be difficult to reverse the decision because the department had already approved the sign.

At this writing we await further response from the department. It appears that continued agitation by angry residents may be necessary to force action on the offending projection. All interested residents should



write to: Robert Passmore, Zoning Administrator, 100 Larkin Street, San Francisco, CA 94107.

The scenario on this violation (and others, such as 2024 Powell—see zoning highlights in this issue) should remind us all to keep a watchful eye in our immediate neighborhood for potential violations. Once a building is completed and it exceeds the height limit or a sign is erected in violation of the sign code, it is difficult to bring the building or the sign down. THD has had greater, and more immediate, success in acting before the deed is done.

## Dante Defoliates North Beach

Despite pleas from neighborhood residents, Dante Serafini *still* has not planted the two trees in containers in front of his newly-opened restaurant. Greenery, we maintain, encourages business, so come on Dante and get with it.



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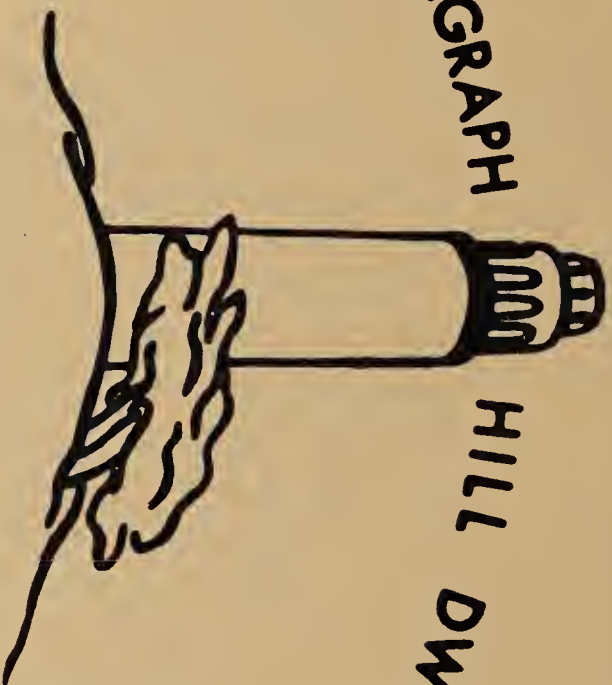


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THE TELEGRAPH

HILL DWELLERS



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